

Press Note

Amaravati, November 08

"SRM University AP to produce design thinkers to make India self-reliant" - Dr VK Saraswat

SRM University-AP organised its University Research Advisory Council Meeting on Monday, November 08, 2021. Dr V K Saraswat, Hon'ble Member, NITI AAYOG, chaired the meeting as the Chairman of the Council. Dr P Sathyanarayanan, President, SRM University-AP, Prof VS Rao, Vice-Chancellor, SRM University-AP, Prof D Narayana Rao, Pro-Vice-Chancellor, SRM University-AP, Dr Vinayak Kalluri, Registrar-in-Charge were among other dignitaries.

In his keynote speech, Dr V K Saraswat congratulated SRM University-AP for their remarkable progress as a university in the past two years. As a nascent university, SRMAP has already made its reputation as a progressive research university of the new era with numerous laurels to its credit. "India is going through a pedagogical shift in terms of policy and implementation. National Education Policy-2020 has sagaciously replaced the age-old redundant policy of 1968. It feels wonderful to note that SRM University-AP is already following NEP-2020 and its recommendations. NEP-2020 has provided extraordinary possibilities and opportunities to make the best use of human and natural resources in terms of education and research. NEP-2020 focuses on making India self-reliant as a nation. Hence NEP-2020 is to create job providers, no more job seekers", said Dr Saraswat.

The suggestions and recommendations of NEP-2020 are curated to facilitate innovation and brilliance. The universities and educational institutions that are the cores of knowledge creation and dissemination are trusted with this responsibility of creating the leaders of tomorrow. In the twenty-first century, the focus should be on translational research of multidisciplinary nature. Industry-Academic relationships are needs of the hour. Dr Saraswat further proposed to develop Value Addition Centre in SRM University-AP to promote translational research. The centre will be strengthening the relationship between Industry and Academia to work on product engineering to deliver market relevant products. "Upscaling and upskilling are substantial in product engineering. We should further be focused on linking our curriculum to India's glorious heritage. Our ancestors made tremendous progress in science, medicine, astrology, astronomy and other branches that the outside world knows very little about. It is now time to remember them and learn from them," opined Dr Saraswat.

For any country that aspires to be among the best globally, knowledge generation should be given importance. For a country like India, with a population of 130 crores, unemployability is a curse. Following the recommendations of NEP-2020, focus should be put on Vocational Courses. It is vital that the students of this generation are aware of the science of engineering rather than science and engineering. Science of Engineering leads to the generation of knowledge, research with meaningful publications and recognition. Dr Saraswat further pointed out that liberal arts are an essential factor for holistic personality development in students.

India has an ambitious plan to make the country carbon neutral by the year 2070. Thus, encouragement is given on environment-friendly research. Thrust is given on the green environment, energy efficiency, alternate and unconventional sources of energy, use of renewable resources and recycle of industrial waste among others. Research should be cost-effective and environment friendly. The focus should be on reducing the carbon footprint in nature with proper planning on the use-storage and distribution of hydrogen in nature. India produces many academicians, scientists and engineers every year, but today India is more about theoretical research. It is now time not only to write papers but also to produce designs that are market relevant. SRMAP should take the initiative in this regard to deliver India able designer-engineers.

Dr V K Saraswat inaugurated two Centres of Excellence that SRM University-AP has recently established to promote translational research. SRM Amara Raja Centre for Energy Storage Devices is set up, in collaboration with Amara Raja Batteries Limited- Tirupati, with a commitment to application-oriented research in the renewable energy and e-mobility. Centre for pioneering studies in Gold & Silver will be working on flagship project with Titan Company Ltd (TANISHQ) to develop novel gold alloy for contemporary jewellery design. The centre also aims to work on projects in collaboration with Waman Hari Pethe & Sons, Mumbai and other jewellery manufacturers across India to produce high strength 22 Karat gold and develop tarnish free silver alloys.

Dr P Sathyanarayanan, President, SRM University-AP, shared his vision to make SRM University-AP as a new-age world-class research university. He agreed with Dr Saraswat and asserted that the management of SRMAP is ready to provide every help needed. "SRMAP encourages deep industry engagements, entrepreneurship along with technological education and advancement. To provide holistic education to students, SRMAP provides a strong emphasis on liberal arts," said Dr Sathyanarayanan. Prof VS Rao, Vice-Chancellor, SRM University-AP, further elaborated on the extensive plan that SRMAP has to build a world-class university in the heart of Andhra Pradesh. The university has collaborative lineage with reputed names in education to provide best education to the students.

Prof D Narayana Rao, Pro-Vice-Chancellor, presented an overall roadmap of SRMAP's progress in research so far and the way forward. The nascent university proudly houses 4500 students and 180 faculty with a few foreign nationals among them. Several DST- Inspire, DBT-Wellcome, Ramalingaswami and Ramanujan faculty are crowning the university with their exceptional research and teaching abilities. Stanford Research recognises the faculty of SRM University-AP among the world's top 2% researchers. The university has published 678 papers in Scopus Indexed journals. The faculty are working on 38 projects with an outlay of 19.17 crores funded by the Government of India and Industry Giants.

The committee agreed that fundamental areas cannot be compromised while working on the challenges in the education sector. Good students and faculty are to be attracted in order to pursue qualitative research. High end teaching and research facilities are essential for higher studies organisations. In initial years, collaborations can be beneficial for networking and promoting qualitative deliverables. The committee advocated for design schools to promote brainstorming for qualitative research. Every institution should have 4 fundamental pillars of education-teaching, research, industry-academia relation, societal benefits. Teaching and research should go hand-in-hand. The weakness of the institutions today is undergrads are not given enough exposure to the practical knowledge of equipment. Critical thinking among students along with project-based teaching are to be encouraged from the initial years of the undergraduate studies.